





## STOP PRESS!

TUI's Executive Committee appointed **Peter MacMenamin** TUI General Secretary on December 7th. Currently Deputy General Secretary, Mr MacMenamin will take up the position of General Secretary on March 1st 2008, following the retirement of Jim Dorney, who has served as General Secretary since 1982.

A native of Dublin, Mr MacMenamin taught at Tallaght Community School. He has been a longstanding union activist and served as President of TUI from 1988 to 1990. He was appointed Deputy General Secretary in 1994.

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**Produced by:**  
Newworld Associates,  
9 Greenmount Avenue,  
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**Printed by:**  
Typecraft Ltd.

# A Word from The President



TUI PRESIDENT, TIM O'MEARA

**The current OECD PISA report states that Irish parents should be “less concerned about choice between schools in order to attain high performance” than parents in other countries. This is a clear and unequivocal endorsement of the work carried out by non-fee paying public schools and Irish teachers should be proud of these findings.**

The report shows that Irish students are performing significantly above the OECD average in terms of competency in science and the ability to use scientific knowledge to resolve problems in daily life.

Ireland should not be content with being above average but must invest in education to move us to the top of the table. Investment in education is investment in Ireland's future. TUI believes the Irish performance would be even more impressive if we provide the necessary funding to ensure that our schools' computer facilities are a benefit to learning across the curriculum and laboratory technicians were introduced at second level schools to provide the interactive methodologies necessary in the teaching and study of science.

This must be addressed as a matter of urgency. This is not the time to pull back from completing the development of our education system. The continued success of our knowledge based economy depends on it.

Despite Minister Hanafin's viewpoint that technician are not needed, there is a clear and strong body of evidence that where such appointments occur, teacher time is freed up to engage in the teaching and learning process, thus maximising

the benefit of class and preparation time to students and fostering a greater appreciation and love of the subjects.

The TUI met with Minister Hanafin in September 2007 and asked her to consider the rescheduling of examinations timetable to help reduce the stress on students especially in the early days of the examination.

While we welcome Minister Hanafin's announcement of changes to the new Leaving Certificate timetable we still have some concerns about the way subjects were timetabled in the first week and we will continue to discuss with the Minister more appropriate combinations in future years. However, the vast majority of students will now have the benefit of a half day in their first week and the huge bulk of writing of the first few days of the examinations will now be greatly alleviated. We welcome this positive change.

In broader terms, we also need to look at reducing the writing time of many exams. Perhaps we need to question if we are 'overexamining' students in some subjects with too many elements to some questions. TUI also believes that the extra 20 minutes additional time in some subjects should only be granted to students identified as having special needs.

While we were bitterly disappointed with the budgetary provision outlined by Minister Cowan we will continue to campaign vigorously on the issues TUI prioritised in the run-up to the Budget. We have serious concerns as to whether or not the provision for special educational needs will be sufficient to have a significant impact on what is becoming a crisis situation in many schools.

We are also concerned that there does not seem to be any significant provision for capital and current projects in Further Education.

There is also no reference to targeted resources for language support for international students, while the lack of mention of funding to bolster our poor ICT facilities is worrying in the extreme.

Schools and students continue to perform remarkably well despite the latest OECD

report showing Ireland positioned joint last out of 29 countries in terms of spending on each second-level student.

The Minister's recent announcement that no new fee paying schools would receive State funding is a tacit acknowledgement that a clear inequality exists but this measure does not go far enough.

It has always been TUI policy that all schools should have an inclusive enrolment where all students from the local community should be provided with a high quality and appropriate education. The TUI calls on the Minister, her Department and NCSE to use its powers to carry out an in depth investigation to see if public funds are being allocated in a manner that ensures all young people have access to a fair and equitable education service irrespective of the economic status of parents.

TUI would anticipate and contend that such a review of the public funds payable to fee paying schools would find that the money can be better used elsewhere in the system. Our thinking on this is not complex. By charging tuition fees, these schools are operating exclusionary enrolment policies in their communities, essentially excluding those students who cannot afford to attend.

Finally, I would like to wish every TUI member a peaceful Christmas and happy and fulfilling 2008. There continues to be a sustained attack on the pay and conditions of workers in the public service and an agenda that wishes to erode the conditions of service of teachers and lecturers.

It is therefore absolutely vital that all members take an active role in their union. New entrants to the profession should always be approached and recruited into membership. Also, all members should be encouraged to attend branch meetings to ensure that TUI is fully briefed with information on the challenges to members in classrooms and lecture halls across the country.

**With Kind Regards,**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim O'Meara". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tim O'Meara, TUI President

# An Historic Collaboration



PICTURED ABOVE AT THE POST PRIMARY EDUCATION FORUM ARE (BACK ROW) NOEL MERRICK, (PRESIDENT, JMB) CIARÁIN FLYNN, (GENERAL SECRETARY, ACCS) AND TIM O'MEARA, (PRESIDENT, TUI) (FRONT ROW) MARY BOHAN (PRESIDENT, IVEA) PATRICIA WROE, (PRESIDENT, ASTI) AND TERESA MCSWEENEY, (PACCS)

The new **Post-Primary Education Forum (PPEF)** was launched on 12th November 2007. The forum was established by the National Parents' Council, the school management associations for second level schools (the IVEA, JMB and ACCS), and by TUI and ASTI. All these key partners have met regularly over the last year to address issues of common concern and to establish a shared viewpoint on priorities for the development of second level education.

The partners recognised that we frequently 'speak the same language' and advocate for the same changes on the same issues but did not do so, until now, in a concerted and unified way. The issuing of the forum's first press release – on priority areas for investment in education within an improved overall budget for second level education –

was a significant first step towards lobbying collaboratively for second level education.

It was also well timed, coming as it did in the run-up to Minister Hanafin's representations for an increase in the overall budgetary allocation to education.

At the inaugural press conference in Dublin's Gresham Hotel, the PPEF called on the Minister for Finance to make overall investment in post-primary education a priority in the Budget and identified the following equally important priority areas for significantly improved investment:

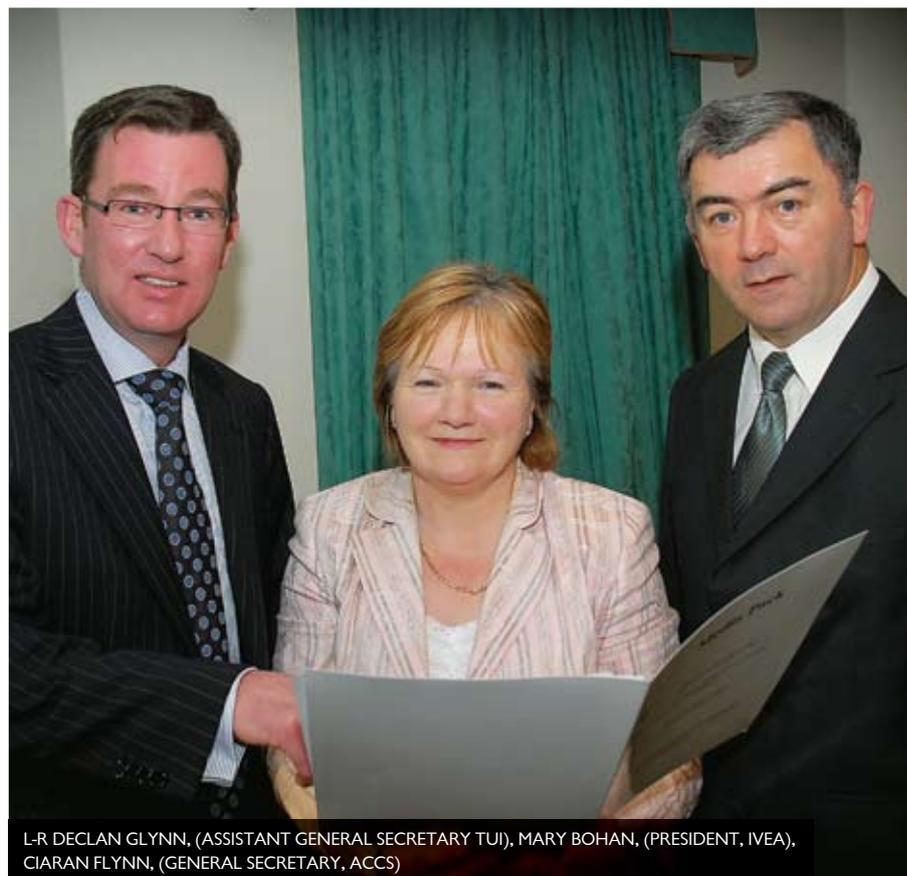
- Improvement in the pupil teacher ratio so as to reduce class sizes and thereby improve the educational chances of our students and widen the scope to offer students more subject choice

- Implementation, in full, of the Report of the Task Force on Student Behaviour in Second Level Schools, 2006, to support schools and parents in fostering positive student behaviour

- An augmented budget for Information Communications Technology to be included in the National Development Plan. This budget must include provision for training of all teachers in the use of ICT in the classroom

- An improvement in the allocation of teaching hours to schools for Learning Support

- Adequate resources to support students with Special Educational Needs in mainstream post-primary schools before the rollout of the EPSEN Act



L-R DECLAN GLYNN, (ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY TUI), MARY BOHAN, (PRESIDENT, IVEA), CIARAN FLYNN, (GENERAL SECRETARY, ACCS)

- Strategic investment in the development of inter-cultural education in our schools
- The development of a properly resourced national ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Strategy
- Enhancement and development of schemes to deal with educational disadvantage.

The forum representatives outlined in detail the partners' shared perspective on each of these key demands.

PPEF representatives also pointed out that Ireland shares bottom place in a ranking of 30 OECD countries of annual spend per second level pupil relative to our country's wealth.

It was pointed out that the proportion of our wealth that we spend has fallen from 5.2% of GDP in 1995 to 4.8% today.

The forum's demand that this be remedied and that spending be brought up, in the first instance, to the average OECD level of 6.4% has been taken up by other parties, including the Irish Congress of Trades Unions, in its own pre-Budget submission.

Following this successful launch, the forum will continue to meet from time to time to discuss major issues of mutual concern and will, from time to time, make agreed public statements and representations to the appropriate authorities on important aspects of second level education in Ireland.

### Objectives Of The PPEF

- To offer an informed and consensus view on key issues in post-primary education
- To heighten government and public awareness of key issues and secure public support for high priority investment in post-primary and further education
- To establish mutually-agreed overall approaches to policy on key issues and,
- To identify priority areas for development and investment in education.

## Curriculum and Assessment at Post-Primary Level - Professional Development Seminar



L-R EMER SMYTH (ESRI), JACQUELINE SHEIL (CHAIR OF EDUCATION SUB COMMITTEE, TUI), DR. GARY GRANVILLE (NCAD), BERNIE JUDGE (EDUCATION & RESEARCH OFFICER, TUI)

The year's professional development seminar, which took place in Portlaoise, was well attended by TUI representatives on NCCA Committees. The TUI was delighted that a number of local branches nominated someone to attend and representatives from the Principals and Deputy Principals Association, the National Association for Principals and Deputy Principals, the Association of Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and the IVEA were also very welcome.

Building on last year's seminar a number of significant developments in curriculum and assessment at post-primary level were considered. The seminar opened with an address from the President Tim O'Meara, who set out key areas of interest and concern to TUI Members including the need:

- for small class sizes to accommodate changed pedagogical practices
- to protect against a deterioration in teacher conditions
- for adequate technical and general support for teachers in implementing second assessment components
- for careful management of the application of learning outcomes to syllabi
- to ensure equitable treatment of subjects in any moves to reduce content

- to avoid curriculum overload at both junior cycle and senior cycle.

The President's address provided the base for roundtable discussions and generated a wide range of questions to be put to the guest speakers at the seminar. The second day started with a comprehensive update from Majella O'Shea and Hal O'Neill from the NCCA on what areas of work had progressed during 2007. Of particular note was the:

- rebalancing subjects at junior cycle
- expression of syllabuses in learning outcomes
- introduction of new subjects and curriculum frameworks at senior cycle
- proposals around new curriculum components for example short courses and transition units at senior cycle
- the concepts of assessment for learning and assessment for learning including second assessment components across subjects.

(See the NCCA website at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) for further details on each of these developments).

This overview session was followed by a challenging presentation by Dr. Gary Granville (NCAD) that considered:

- the curriculum design process incorporating ideas on zones of conflict, forms of control and working towards consensus
- learning outcomes as a control ideology or a tool for transformative learning
- the teacher and the curriculum and continuing professional development
- structural changes that could empower teachers.

The papers formed the basis of an open ended question and answer session that addressed resource limitations, teacher in-service and professional development needs, teacher qualifications issues, implications of integrating learners with special educational needs into mainstream classes, guidance, assessment issues and student and teacher workload.

Emer Smyth, a research consultant with the ESRI delivered the final paper. This presented the research findings of the first Irish longitudinal study (commissioned by the NCCA) that explored student experiences in the junior cycle and in transition to senior cycle. The study involved 900 students in 20 case study schools and raised a number of significant issues of interest to teachers including:

- The Junior Certificate Examination and its implications for teaching and learning
- Perceptions of Subjects
- Ability Groupings: streaming, subjects levels, low expectations
- Influences on Examination Performances
- Impact of Gender and Social Class.

In closing her presentation Emer highlighted a number of areas for consideration by school and teachers including:

- More flexible approaches to ability groupings
- Promoting greater access to higher level subjects
- Actively engaging students using diverse teaching methods

- Promote positive social climate, positive behaviour and student involvement.

The discussion that ensued highlighted the challenge to teachers in listening to and acting on the outcomes of the research in the context of large classes, inadequate professional development, curriculum overload, the integration of students with special educational needs, the pressure of the points system and the limited commitment of government to resourcing real change.

The seminar closed by considering ways of supporting on going engagement by TUI representatives and local branches in informed debate on curriculum an assessment issues so that analysis is well informed. Further annual seminars supported by regional and specific subject meetings were advocated.

Thanks to all who participated in the day and we forward to meeting you again at future events.

### Message to TUI Representatives on NCCA Committees

Don't forget to keep TUI Head Office informed of developments at meetings of Course Committees and Board of Studies. Why? Once these committees reach agreement on syllabuses they are presented to the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Committee and the NCCA Council for consideration. The TUI has two representatives on each of these who should be aware of your views when deliberating on documents presented for discussion and approval. Please send your comments to **Bernie Judge**, Education and Research Officer at [bjudge@tui.ie](mailto:bjudge@tui.ie) or phone Head Office at 01 4922588. Many thanks.

### Quick Update – Society and Politics at Senior Cycle

'Society and Politics', a new course at senior cycle has been under development by the relevant NCCA Committees and Council for some time. The proposed course will soon undergo extensive public consultation. The views of teachers and schools will be crucial to advising on any changes that should be considered before the final course is forwarded to the Minister for approval.

The names and contact details of the TUI Representatives on the Society and Politics Course Committee are posted on the TUI website at [www.tui.ie](http://www.tui.ie)

Please forward any comments you wish to make to either of the representatives or **Bernie Judge** in TUI, Head Office.



ANN CORCORAN, SEAMUS MULLANEY, DAN KEANE (TUI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE)



PARTICIPANTS AT TUI PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR



PARTICIPANTS AT TUI PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR



EMER SMYTH, ESRI

# Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers, Retirement at the end of the 2007/2008 School Year

The details of the early retirement scheme for teachers under strands 1, 2 and 3 are set out in Circular letter **102/2007**. This Circular letter and explanatory documentation can be downloaded from the TUI Web-site [www.tui.ie](http://www.tui.ie) or from the Department of Education and Science Web-site [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

The closing date for receipt of completed applications in the Department of Education and Science for teachers applying to retire at the end of the 2007/08 school year is:

**Strands 1 and 2**  
**Thursday, 17th January 2008**

**Strand 3**  
**Thursday, 14th February 2008**

This scheme, which was introduced as a pilot scheme, is currently being reviewed. Pending the completion of the review, it has been decided that the pilot scheme will be continued to include teachers retiring at the end of the 2007/08 and 2008/09 academic years.

## Structure of the Scheme

The Scheme consists of Three Strands:

**Strand 1** relates to teachers who are consistently experiencing professional difficulties in their teaching duties.

If a teacher is eligible to retire under Strand 1 he/she is entitled to **5 added years** or potential service to compulsory retirement age, whichever is the lesser amount, provided that the aggregate of actual pensionable service and added years will not in any case exceed 35 years.

**Strand 2** relates to teachers whose retirement will provide their school with an opportunity to enhance the education service provided through facilitating change.

Teachers eligible to apply under this Strand get a maximum of **2 added years** whereby the amount of added years granted in any case will not exceed potential service to compulsory retirement age and the aggregate of actual pensionable service and added years will not in any case exceed 35 years.

**Strand 3** relates to teachers who are in posts, which are surplus to requirements.

Teachers deemed eligible to retire under Strand 3 will get **7 added years** or potential service to compulsory retirement age, whichever is the lesser. Total service for pension and lump sum purposes will be limited to the standard maximum of 40 years.

## General Eligibility

The scheme is available to applicants who are currently in permanent teaching service or are employed under contracts of indefinite duration. It is also available to applicants under strands 1 or 2 who are on career break but are due to return to teaching.

Please note that a teacher may apply to retire under one or more of the Strands.

Separate application forms have been designed to suit the particular requirements of each strand and in the case of Strand 3 to suit the requirements of the particular sector. A copy of each of these forms is available on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) or by contacting:

Pensions Section, Early Retirement  
Department of Education and Science,  
Athlone, Co. Westmeath  
Tel: (0906) 483661

## Processing of Applications

Applications under Strands 1 and 2 will be submitted, in the first instance, to an Early Retirement Advisory Committee

(ERAC). ERAC then processes applications in accordance with guidelines and principles adopted by the Early Retirement Consultative Council (ERCC).

The ERAC will make a recommendation, citing reasons, to the Minister for Education and Science for each decision. The Minister's decision will be conveyed to the ERAC, to the teacher and to management.

If the decision is positive the teacher will have two weeks within which to accept the offer of early retirement. An offer of early retirement under Strand 1 or Strand 2 may be accepted without prejudice to any application that may have been made under Strand 3.

**Strand 3** Applications for early retirement under Strand 3 will be considered by the Department of Education and Science and submitted to the Minister for decision. If the decision is positive the teacher will have two weeks within which to accept the offer of early retirement.

ERAC consists of one nominee of the teachers' unions, one nominee of the school management bodies and one nominee of the Ministers for Education and Finance. The Committee has an independent chairperson appointed by the Ministers.

Decisions on applications under Strands 1 and 2 will be notified to applicants and school authorities during April/May 2008.

## Note: Ill Health

Intending applicants should note that there are long standing provisions for teachers to retire on grounds of ill-health. Where it is considered that ill health may be a factor, the applicant may be advised that it would be more appropriate for him/her to apply in the first instance for early retirement on grounds of ill health.

The recent meeting of the IR Forum progressed very few items. This fact is of serious concern to the Executive Committee. The Executive has expressed its displeasure with the fact that matters are raised with the forum and frequently remain under consideration for a long period of time. Often at the end of that period of time they are responded to by the official side in the negative.

### Incremental Credit – Labour Court Recommendation

A case in point is the Labour Court Recommendation 18366 and the implementation of the Circular Letter 12/07 which is a partial implementation of this recommendation. This Circular Letter implements the recommendation in so far as it grants incremental credit but only to those persons who were not employed in the Institute before the implementation date.

Branches have been seeking to progress

the implementation within their particular Institutes with varying degree of success. The Cork Colleges Branch recently through frustration and delays by management as perceived by the Branch passed a motion for industrial action and balloted accordingly. Payments were as a result brought forward and the first payments were received in the November cheques.

There remain a series of issues with regard to the implementation of this circular and these are to be discussed with the Department of Education and Science and

Institute management in the near future.

There also remains the issue of those persons who had some employment relationship with the Institute prior to the implementation date. This matter has not yet been addressed by the official side and the Union has indicated that it is not prepared to continue with the same level of patience as has been exhibited in the past in regard to this issue.

A further issue is the application of the €1,500 which remains also to be discussed.

### Other Matters at the Forum

The one issue that was resolved at the recent meeting of the IR Forum was its use for the purposes of interpreting agreements. Prior to this any agreements which had been sought to be interpreted at the forum were described as individual cases, as such were not permitted to be discussed at the forum. The Union has now obtained agreement that even if issues arise from individual cases that they may be interpreted by the forum but without prejudice to the personal case which give rise to the issue. The Union regards this as progress.

The following issues remain on the agenda for the IR Forum at sub committee level

and it is hoped that the planned full day meeting which is set aside to deal with these issues will progress a number of them. The issues are as follows:

- **Credit base examination payments/rates of payment of examination fees**
- **Additional SLI Teaching posts**
- **Issues relating to positions of Heads of School and Heads of Department** – this relates to the Union’s claim for rotating Heads of School and Heads of Department and also relates to a claim by the Union for a provision for Heads of School of Heads of Department should they wish to step down from posts
- **The application of a Rights**

### Commissioner decision on incremental credit to other comparable employees in other Institutes

- **Procedures for suspension and dismissal under the Institute of Technology Act**

### ■ Fixed Term Work Act

**Outstanding issues** – This while technically under the auspices of the IR Forum this is being discussed at a different forum through facilitated discussions chaired by Janet Hughes. One of the major items in the next stage of these discussions concerns the employment of lecturers on part-time or other separately funded courses or where such lecturers are paid on a casual part-time basis.

## Strategic Innovation Fund Projects and “Consultation”

The Union has become increasingly concerned at the trends shown by Institute management in relation to SIF projects. In short there is in the view of the Union a complete absence of consultation in regard to these projects and although the word consultation has been used in regard to engagements which have taken place in relation to SIF Projects, what is actually happened would bring the word consultation into disrepute.

Consultation as set up in the Information and Consultation Legislation 2006 envisages a vigorous process where both sides discuss an issue with a view to trying to resolve differences. This does not adequately describe what has happened in relation to the SIF Projects.

Initially when during the summer of 2006 the HEA asked for submissions a number of Institutes made submissions and some submissions were made in respect of all fourteen Institutes. This was done without any consultation with the Union or even advice to the Union until after the submission of the projects.

It was subsequently explained by the Council of Directors that the time scale for submission was exceedingly short, it was during the summer time and they regretted the absence of consultation and firmly committed that before future requests for submissions there would be full consultation with the Union.

In respect of the five projects referred to in previous editions of TUI News, one in particular, Project 1 **Sectoral Capacity Assessment and Evaluation** was the subject of a very confused meeting. The Union was invited to a meeting by way of a letter headed “Management Capacity Analysis”. At that meeting it transpired that the purpose of the meeting was consultation with TUI and all other Unions in relation to the **Sectoral Capacity Assessment and Evaluation** project.

The Union stated that the notice was inappropriate in that it was misleading,

the level of consultation was inappropriate in that it was inadequate (two hours on a Tuesday afternoon for consultation with all four Unions).

This on an issue as serious as the content of this project was intended to be is grossly inadequate and the frequent reference to the Unions being referred to as “external stake holders” by the consultants added insult to the injury.

The meeting continued with a forceful exchange of views and at the conclusion of which the Union sought further and more in-depth consultation in regard to the issues. No further consultation was entered into by the Council of Directors and some time later communication was received from the them to the effect that they had decided that there had been sufficient consultation with the Unions in regard to SIF Projects.

The Union very much regrets this attitude taken by the Council of Directors and has advised accordingly. The response to this advice has been that the Council of Directors decided unilaterally and without any further consultation with any Union to deem the National Partnership Forum as being the consultation body for the purposes of SIF.

This decision has not as yet been accepted by the TUI and the manner in which it had been taken appears to suggest that the concept of consultation is regarded very differently by both sides.

The promised consultation once the HEA sought proposals in respect of the second round of projects never transpired and once again the Union was not advised of the request for consultation either by the HEA or by the Council of Directors. This despite the union having indicated that it had a proposal it wished to discuss in relation to a possible project.

This continuing trend which is becoming evident of the most cynical use of the term “consultation” i.e. the briefest of discussions followed by action irrespective of the Union position, is extremely unsatisfactory as far as this Union is concerned and it is extremely difficult to understand how this attitude is maintaining while simultaneously discussions are being considered on the future of the National Partnership Forum and on additional funding being made available for such a forum.

## School Attendance – What Works and Why?

### NEWB School Attendance Conference 2008

#### Register your interest now

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) will host a national conference aimed at bringing together educators, researchers and policy makers to explore issues around school attendance and participation.

The conference will also explore what schools can do practically and what support they need to develop workable attendance policies and strategies based on international and Irish best practice.

**Date:** Tuesday, 26 February 2008

**Venue:** The Law Society, Blackhall Place, Dublin 7

You can register your interest in attending now at [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie). Places are limited. The conference will be of particular interest to school principals and managers, members of the teacher education community and education researchers.

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) is the independent statutory organisation with responsibility to ensure that every child attends school, or otherwise receives an education or participates in training.

NEWB School Attendance Conference 2008

16-22 Green Street, Dublin 7

Tel: 01 873 8600



National Educational  
Welfare Board

An Bord Náisiúnta  
Leasa Oideachais



**NEWB**  
NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL WELFARE BOARD  
AN BORD NÁISIÚNTA LEASA OIDEACHAIS

# Big Movements in Markets

Due to the volatility in investment markets over the past number of months, the following article from an investment manager dealing with the reasons behind the volatility and the outlook for investment markets may be of interest to members who hold AVCs.

The recent sell off in equities has been driven by a couple of factors. Firstly, the pause in the monetary easing bias from the US Federal Reserve has removed one of the major support factors for equity markets, and secondly, problems in the credit and asset backed security markets have intensified.

Not only does liquidity remain scarce in commercial paper, inter-bank, and credit markets, but a number of high profile write-downs associated with sub-prime loans by investment banks have led to renewed concerns about the potential for the financial crisis to ultimately have a serious effect on corporate earnings, and ultimately the US and Global economic outlook. Talk surrounding recession in the US and the beginning of a bear market for equities is increasing. These factors have led to a fall in worldwide equity markets.

Despite acknowledging the current risks to the financial system, and the likely impact on economic and earnings growth, we do not believe the next bear\* market has begun, and would draw upon the analogies between the current market environment and that of August this year. In August, investors began to panic about the potential scale of the crisis looming in the credit markets, and were essentially demanding the US Federal Reserve to act. These fears have re-emerged, and again, the market is looking for some indication from the Fed that they intend to manage the short term crisis and future economic slowdown.

We expect Ben Bernanke, chairman of the Federal Reserve in the US to listen to what markets are telling him, though we acknowledge the risk that the Fed's response may not be imminent, and the volatility in markets will persist. With regard to the financial crisis, investors should take some comfort over the increasing transparency with regard to the disclosure from the major banks, but are also mindful of the short term risk of more bad news from the corporate sector.

## Short Term Outlook

This perhaps overly focuses on the outlook over the very near term, and when looking further ahead towards the end of the year and the beginning of 2008, we believe the fundamental backdrop remains relatively supportive for equity markets.

Our view of continued strength in economies outside the US with only a slowdown in the US economy, are key for our relatively constructive case for equities. In addition to this, valuations in the equity market continue to be relatively attractive.

Arguably if excessive valuations exist they are in the areas of property and credit, as the major unwind in excesses in the equity market occurred after the collapse of the technology boom earlier in the decade. Due to the strength in earnings since then, equities in major economies have not really re-rated, which should be a support factor going forward.



## Conclusion

We have entered the latter stages of the bull\* market, where earnings growth slows, credit weakens, and investors typically become increasingly concerned about the potential for recession. Equity markets can still make gains, particularly if central banks enter a phase of monetary easing through interest rate cuts. Nevertheless equity market corrections have and will continue to become more frequent, and volatility will remain high. The coming months are likely to be characterised by volatility, but we continue to expect further gains from equity markets as the fundamental backdrop and valuations remain supportive. The reaction from the US Federal Reserve and scale of surprises in the credit markets are key.

The Irish Equity Market has been one of the worst affected this year given its exposure to banking and construction stocks. At these levels we believe there is real value to be had, however there are very few buyers at present. It may be some time before value is recognised but pension funds should remain invested.

## Graham Brooks

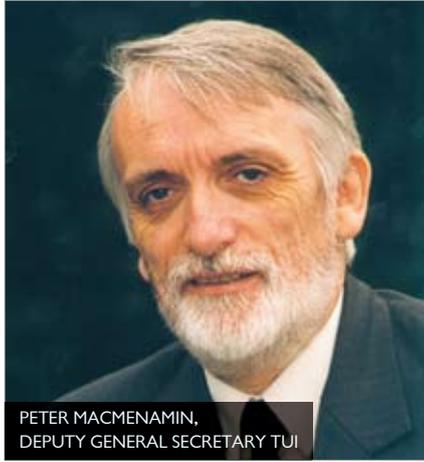
Graham Brooks is a Director of F&C Ireland, which manages globally, funds in excess of €148 billion.

\* Bear Market - a falling market

\* Bull Market - a rising market

# Profit-led Higher Education an Unhealthy Mismatch

The following article, written by TUI Deputy General Secretary Peter MacMenamin, was originally published in the Irish Times on Thursday November 8th 2007



PETER MACMENAMIN,  
DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY TUI

The entry of Independent News and Media, the parent company of Independent Newspapers, into the field of Higher Education prompts an analysis of the private sector of Irish higher education; what is private sector higher education, why does it exist, who does it exist for and what are its values?

Many would take the view that education is not something which can be sold in the market place as a commodity. Most true educationalists would in general be shocked at the concept that first, second or third level educational institutes could or would be run on the basis of a business enterprise where the objective is to make profits and to satisfy shareholders. The entry of INM into the field of higher education should therefore be a matter of concern to such educationalists.

The values and social responsibilities attaching to an education system are significantly influenced by the society in which the education system exists. Public sector education establishments whether they are at first, second or third level are established by statute and will in general have broad educational principles enshrined in the relevant statute. They may have obligations to plan and to advise statutory bodies [Government or the HEA] of the

plan, to promote regional development, the Irish language, provide for gender balance, for access to education for the disadvantaged and to contribute to the development of the state in terms of stated values.

They will also in usually (though in some notable exceptions) have an element at least of democratic accountability both at the level of the board of governance where there is frequently representation of elected persons both from within the organisation, staff representation and from outside the organisation. In addition there is a level of financial accountability in that there are the normal demands on the spenders of public funds to be accountable and answerable, ultimately to the Oireachtas.

“Multinational companies focus only on one outcome, **the bottom line, the profit, the share value.** Educational values don't have an impact on the profit line.”

In higher education in both Universities and Institutes of Technology the concept of academic freedom for members of academic staff is enshrined in the relevant statutes. This freedom is rightly valued by educators and it exists in order to protect the values of the educational system and to prevent untoward influences being brought to bear on individual members of the academic staff. Specifically the college is obliged to preserve and promote the principles of academic freedom and members of the academic staff have the freedom, within the law, “to question and test received wisdom, to put forward

new ideas and to state controversial or unpopular opinions”.

Where therefore do the values and social responsibilities of an educational institution arise when such an institution is owned controlled by a multinational company. It is clear, and perhaps right and proper from their perspective, that multinational companies focus only on one outcome, the bottom line, the profit, the share value. Educational values don't have an impact on the profit line. Academic freedom is unrelated to the share value. So whether it be International News and Media with its ownership of its newly established “Independent College” (in itself a contradiction in terms) or whether it is Dublin Business School, Portobello College or a chain of language schools throughout the country who are owned directly or indirectly by Kaplan, a subsidiary of the Washington Post which proudly announces that none of its employees is represented by a union; where do they obtain their values. The answer to that is clear, they derive from the ability to make profit and nothing else. There will be nothing relating to equity of access to education or any indication of education as being part of the social fabric of Irish society and as such should that it should accord in its overall policy of increasing equity in society by providing a level of education in accordance with the needs of the individual not in accordance with their ability to pay. Indeed probably nothing necessarily directly relating to education at all because as far as the shareholders' profits are concerned all that matters is the size of the profits and whether these come from the sale of education, furniture or anything else the bottom line is profit, not student welfare.

Peter MacMenamin  
Deputy General Secretary  
Teachers' Union of Ireland

**PISA 2006 Report An Unequivocal Endorsement of Public Schools**

The PISA 2006 report’s assertion that Irish parents should be “less concerned about choice between schools in order to attain high performance” than parents in other countries is a clear and unequivocal endorsement of the work carried out by non-fee paying public schools. In keeping with earlier studies, parental support including the number of books and educational resources in the home and absences from school are key to high performance of students.

Our reading score of 5th out of 29 OECD countries is hugely impressive. The findings are even more impressive when cross referenced with another recent OECD publication (Education At A Glance) which has Ireland positioned joint last out of 29 countries in terms of spending on each second-level student. Irish students are performing significantly above the OECD average in terms of competency in science and the ability to use scientific knowledge to resolve problems in daily life.

Irish teachers and students alike should be commended on these findings, which show that there is a firm platform from which to further promote and develop science education. Anecdotal evidence indicates that many schools are ill-equipped in terms of equipment and facilities to provide the interactive methodologies necessary in the teaching study of science subjects. This must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

TUI believes the Irish performance would be even more impressive if laboratory technicians were introduced at second level schools. Despite Minister Hanafin’s viewpoint that technician are not needed, there is a clear and strong body of evidence that where such appointments occur, teacher time is freed up to engage in the teaching and learning process, thus maximising the benefit of class and preparation time to students and fostering a greater appreciation and love of the subjects.

The small number of schools that have funded laboratory technicians from local private funds have demonstrated the real value of such positions to students. There has been a complete lack of commitment on the part of the Government to increasing the numbers taking science subjects at second level or to support the quality of science teaching that is required in the 21st Century.



MARY O’ CONNOR, TUI PRESIDENT TIM O’ MEARA, TOM MOLONEY AND BRENDAN WORSFOLD, ALL FROM ST ENDA’S COMMUNITY SCHOOL LIMERICK AT A RECENT RETIREMENT FUNCTION



CLAIRE PRENDERGAST (SEC); KIERAN TUMMON (CHAIR); JOAN SHEAHAN (AREA REP) AT RECENT AGM OF DUBLIN CITY C&C BRANCH



A SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE RECENT TUI BRANCH OFFICERS TRAINING - HODSON BAY HOTEL, ATHLONE

# Multiculturalism and Values

Mary Muldowney discusses the need for greater understanding by teachers/counsellors/therapists of the value systems of students/clients from other cultures.

The TUI hope to publish articles on a regular basis that address education policy issues of interest to practitioners. In the first instance we hope to draw from articles written by teachers who have undertaken or are undertaking postgraduate courses and research. The primary aim is to provide teachers with an opportunity to share views and perspectives with their colleagues and to contribute to public awareness and discussion. Advice is welcome on how best to progress this idea but to get started we are publishing the article below on multiculturalism.

The importance of a culture-centred perspective cannot be underestimated in regard to Ireland's radically changing nature, particularly when one considers the findings from the **2006 General Census Report**, which indicated that one in ten of the population, arrived in the country within the last five years. Hence, for teachers/counsellors/therapists to work successfully in a multicultural context, it is essential that they have a clear understanding of the term 'multiculturalism' and of the value systems of their students.

The term 'multicultural' refers to the situation where a society is portrayed as having a diverse and heterogeneous set of cultural practices, as a result of the existence in that society of differential social and cultural traits. Consequently, debates around multiculturalism are multi- and interdisciplinary. Such debates concern politics and pedagogy, the humanities and cultural studies, science and social science, law and political economy, public administration, women's studies and ethnic studies, race, ethnicity, class, gender and nation. Interestingly, the actual word 'multiculturalism' is of relative recent coinage, although the phenomenon it describes has been present throughout history. In today's world, the term can have different meanings, some of which will influence its application to policy and programmes in plural societies. The general premise that underlies all definitions of multiculturalism is the right of individuals to be respected for their differences. This rests upon the idea that all cultures have values, beliefs, customs, language, knowledge and worldviews that are valid and viable and that

these components reflect the experiences of a particular group.

Multiculturalism as an orientation accepts both the maintenance of cultural identity and characteristics of all ethnocultural groups, and the contact and participation of all groups in the larger plural society. In its broadest sense, multiculturalism is critical and resistant to mono-cultural assimilation. According to John Berry et al: "Multiculturalism presupposes the existence of an over-arching framework of shared values that acts as a linchpin in a multi-ethnic state – a framework that is flexible and responsive to the various cultures and ethnic groups that compose the nation".<sup>1</sup>

One means of understanding cultures is by comparing their different value systems. Geert Hofstede considers values to have a functional purpose in each culture and to reflect a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs to others. Values also are important for expressing identity and for communication purposes. In short, values define the parameters of cultural systems. Therefore, awareness of a student's/client's value system is crucial for understanding that person in his/her contextual environment. Indeed one of the most extensively investigated concepts in cross-cultural psychology concerning value systems is that of **Individualism/Collectivism**. This dimension emerged as one of four factors in an important multinational study by Hofstede.

He states:

*Individualism pertains to societies in which ties between individuals are loose;*

*everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive groups, which throughout the peoples' lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.*<sup>2</sup>

Interestingly, a person can hold both individualistic and collectivistic values at the same time.

However, to understand what it means to be a member of an individualistic or collectivistic culture, it is important and necessary to distinguish between the underlying philosophical or cognitive dimensions of a culture and how these aspects are expressed in social behavioural patterns. This can be one means of exploring the cultural world of an individual. Underlying beliefs and assumptions of individualist and collectivist cultures can be compared and contrasted in relation to the following:

- The Concept of Reality: Holistic/Dualistic
- The Sense of Self: Referential/Indexical experience of self
- The Construction of Morality: Individual choice and Responsibility/Karma – Destiny
- The Concept of Time: Linear/Circular
- The Significance of Place: High/Low affinity.



External observable cultural aspects pertaining to cultural identity in such cultures relate to the following:

- Non-Verbal Behaviour: Touch, Proximity, Gesture, Eye contact
- Language: Concrete/Abstract. Linear/Circular narratives – storytelling
- Gender: Narrow/Wide definitions
- Emotional Expression: Overt/Covert
- Theory of Healing: Scientific/Traditional Understanding.

In brief, the most notable difference between the two values systems appears to be a fundamental philosophical distinction concerning how people arrange, order and perceive reality – cosmology. If teachers/counsellors/therapists are not aware of the distinctions and the values inherent in individualism and collectivism as orientations, erroneous conclusions and decisions may ensue. Derald Wing Sue and David Sue, two leading writers on multiculturalism consider that there is a need for those working in a multicultural context to work at:

[Balancing the individualistic approach with a collectivistic reality that acknowledges our embeddedness in families, significant others, communities and cultures. A client is](#)

[perceived not just as an individual, but also as an individual who is the product of his or her social and cultural context.](#)<sup>3</sup>

It is also important to be aware of some of the implications of Individualistic and Collectivistic value systems when working in a multicultural context. Western concepts such as fulfilling one's potential, self-actualisation or authenticity may have little or no meaning for individuals who have a strict collectivist background. In other words, the 'individual' or 'autonomous' self may be alien to the 'connected' or 'relational' self of the person from a collectivist culture. Concerning the construction of morality, Western individualistic thinking places a strong emphasis on the person's 'internal locus of evaluation' and the person's capacity to make moral choices based on an individual set of values. In contrast, persons from a collectivist culture place a heavy emphasis on the influence of destiny or Karma in their lives. The construction of time in various cultural settings can have major practical consequences. For example, the concept of an appointment is alien to many people from non-individualistic cultures, in that many people would expect to be able to visit a teacher/counsellor/healer when the spirit moves them, rather than at a specific appointed time. The verbal patterns of students/clients from collectivist cultures, e.g. narrating a story in a circular manner, may impinge on the time constraints of

Western trained teachers. The emotional bond of people from collectivist cultures to land and place is also extremely powerful. Indeed, it can be difficult for people from an individualist culture, where the bond may be very insignificant to comprehend this. Home and land for people of collectivist origins are paramount and can very much reflect the reality of their worldview in terms of the inter-connectedness of humankind and nature.

In summary, for people working in a multicultural context, awareness and understanding of their students'/clients' value systems is crucial, if a dialogical relationship is to develop. In essence, a dialogical relationship is necessary between people of diverse cultural groups, if an over-arching framework of shared values in a multi-ethnic state is to develop. Such a framework must be flexible and responsive to the various cultures and ethnic groups that compose our nation.

#### References:

- 1 Berry, John W., et al. *Cross-Cultural Psychology*. 2nd ed. U.K. Cambridge University Press, 2002, p375
- 2 Draguns, J.G. *Universal & Cultural Aspects of Counselling & Psychotherapy*. In: Pedersen, P.B. et al., eds. *Counselling Across Cultures*. 5th ed. UK Sage Publications, 2002, p35
- 3 Wing Sue, D., Sue, D. *Counselling the Culturally Diverse*. N.Y. Open University Press, 2003: p17

# Special Educational Needs Update

## Department's Failure to Address the Developing Crisis

The union recently made a detailed submission to the Department of Education and Science regarding implementation of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004. The Act must be fully commenced by the end of September 2010. We have demanded that a number of critical issues be comprehensively addressed in the interim.

Our demands are based on our analysis of the situation at school level and are informed by our determination to ensure an appropriate, high quality public education for children with special educational needs (SENs). We are also acutely conscious of the imperative of ensuring an education of undiminished quality for children who do not have special educational needs.

## Minister Must Show Political and Moral Courage

TUI highlighted two over-arching political issues that must be addressed decisively and urgently by the Minister.

In the first place, the union described as ill-judged and counter-productive the apparent insistence of government on accommodating all children with SENs in mainstream settings, regardless of their capacity to benefit from a school's provision. Some children continue to need special settings and should not become victims of an ideological obsession with mainstream placement.

Most fundamentally of all, the union insisted that if the ongoing concentration of children with SENs in certain schools and their deliberate exclusion by others is not decisively addressed, successful implementation of the Act and of national policy regarding inclusion will be confounded. The "deflector" schools that operate shameful, segregationist practices must be named and hit where it hurts most – in the glass jaw of funding.

## The Unacceptable Cost of Departmental Failure

It is now undeniably the case that continued failure by the Minister, her department and

the National Council for Special Education to implement effective measures to halt and reverse the trend towards concentration of students with special educational needs in a limited number of schools will have catastrophic results for those schools, including increasing haemorrhage from a school's cohort of students who do not have SENs, teacher burn-out and insupportable administrative burdens.

Do the powers that be consider it acceptable that schools which respect and apply principles of equity and inclusion should have their viability threatened so that other schools may continue to display contempt for public policy, for their neighbour schools, for children with SENs and for the parents of those children?

So far, the response of the DES to this fast-developing crisis has been risible. The Minister and her Department - having acknowledged that there is a serious problem - have closed their eyes and wished it away. It is rumoured that a partial audit of enrolment policies is being conducted. Depending on one's perspective this is either a quaintly naïve or cynical exercise. Enrolment policies are, invariably, for good and against evil. Schools that exclude children with SENs are rather unlikely to admit as much. Typically, they camouflage unacceptable practice in worthy policy that articulates the usual pieties.

## What Must Be Done

What is urgently needed is an aggressive Departmental strategy, involving:

- publication on a school-by-school basis of the enrolment of students with SENs
- the rigorous use of Whole School Evaluation to challenge segregationist schools
- the progressive reduction of public funding to such schools
- an insistence by the regional officers of the NCSE (the SENOs) that these schools share the challenge of providing a suitable service to children with SENs
- the commencement and robust utilisation of Section 10 of the Act that allows designation of schools and
- the allocation of sufficient resources to

remove from such schools the excuse that they are not equipped to receive children with SENs.

Doing nothing is not an acceptable or effective strategy. Appealing to some imagined, suppressed, democratic impulse in segregationist, deflector schools is futile. Refusal to act for fear of accelerating the current trends betrays a lack of courage and vision. It doesn't even have the merit of being prudent as the trends are accelerating in any event, in the absence of action by the Department.

## Resourcing Implementation of EPSEN

In addition to tackling the scandalous ghettoisation that is continuing apace, the Department also needs to devise imaginative measures in relation to:

### Teacher Allocation

- an incremental, general allocation model in respect of students with SENs, based on a minimum ex-quota allocation of 0.5 Special Needs Teacher to each school
- additional, appropriately weighted, concessionary allocation in respect of students with low-incidence special needs
- the prioritisation of teacher allocation, over the allocation of SNAs.

### Class Size

- progressive reduction in the size of mainstream classes related to the number of students in the classes assessed as having special educational needs
- the setting of a maximum number of students with special educational needs in a mainstream class, general or practical, in order to facilitate effective, differentiated learning and teaching.

## Co-ordination of Special Educational Needs provision

- Special Needs Co-ordinator and, as necessary, Special Needs team with time allowances proportional to the number of students assessed as having

special educational needs and with a statutory entitlement to an Individual Education Plan. The creation of a position of Special Needs Co-ordinator, while welcome as part of an integrated suite of measures, would not, of itself, be sufficient as a response to the logistical and co-ordination challenges that post-primary schools face in terms of ensuring a quality service for children with SENs. There is an irrefutable case for the allocation of SEN co-ordination / planning time to schools in order to facilitate the development and effective functioning of a SEN team. The capacity of a school to provide appropriately differentiated curriculum will depend in significant measure upon the availability of time for subject-specialist classroom teachers to engage in the requisite developmental work

- minimum time allowance to a school's allocation of 4 hours per week, with increments of 2 hours for the third and for each additional student with assessed special educational needs.

### Assessments

- national coverage by NEPS - based on a student/ psychologist ratio of 5000:1
- assessment during the student's penultimate or final year in primary schools with validity of the assessment maintained until the end of Junior Cycle, post-primary
- school-administered assessments for students with (non-IEP) special needs with appropriate resourcing in terms of time, training and materials
- modification, for post-primary application, of the (NEPS) staged assessment process.

### Training

- the inclusion of a mandatory special educational needs component in all training-in-teaching courses
- in-service training in special education for all serving teachers: this to be school-based and for a minimum of 4 days during the remainder of the EPSEN implementation period
- training themes to include: the inclusive classroom, the inclusive school,

the special needs team, differentiated learning and teaching; involving parents/guardians, development and review of IEPs, school administered assessments

- customised training, on request, for Learning Support teachers in Special Needs teaching
- development of on-line resources
- enhanced staffing of the Special Education Support Service
- increased number of places for serving teachers on special educational needs courses
- paid leave for teachers to attend courses in SENs and the provision of paid substitution.

### Curriculum

- development of curricular provision that meets the needs of the learner with SENs – this may require expanded JCSP provision, alternative programmes (perhaps FETAC Levels 1 and 2)
- explicit linkages between in-service training for teachers and the methodologies that best address the needs of learners with SENs
- the provision of premium allocation to schools that accommodate disproportionately large number of children with SENs to ensure that they can continue to offer mainstream subjects at all levels (Higher, Ordinary and, where applicable, Foundation)
- infrastructural investment to facilitate unimpeded use of buildings and plant by children with SENs in order that they may have access to a broad curriculum/ subject range
- provision of assistive educational technology as appropriate, with a particular emphasis on ICT
- ongoing development by relevant agencies of programmes and syllabi for children with varying degrees of SENs
- development and dissemination of subject/programme guidelines for teachers of children with SENs.

### Preparation for progression to education/training/employment

- assistance and resources for schools to enable them to discharge their

statutory responsibilities in this regard. In particular, additional, dedicated Guidance Counselling allocation is required.

### Amendment to Legislation

- the replacement of "1 month" with "2 months" in Section 3.5 of the EPSEN Act. In the absence of such amendment, schools will inevitably be in breach of the legislation and the schools that are most welcoming of children with SENs will be most frequently in breach
- application of the EPSEN Act to Youthreach and other non-mainstream settings as well as the provision of the requisite additional resources in terms of allocation, time and training.

The TUI has warned the Department against adopting a low-rent approach in regard to resources for implementation of the EPSEN Act. Schools and teachers require significant time and training to meet and manage the challenge. This, in turn, makes necessary the provision of significant additional resourcing.

### Ask the Experts

Members of the TUI teach in public sector schools that are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all learners, irrespective of their varying abilities. It is to our members that the daily task of implementation of the EPSEN Act, in all its particulars, will devolve. Therefore, we have an entirely reasonable expectation that our views will influence and inform decisions taken in relation to implementation of the EPSEN Act.

### Do the right thing, Minister

We invite the Minister and the Department to take note: our patience is not inexhaustible; meek compliance with slipshod policy may not be assumed and ongoing indulgence of Departmental failure to act against segregationist schools will not be forthcoming. It's time the Minister did her best for children with SENs and the teachers and schools that serve them, rather than doing as little as she can get away with.



Pictured (Right to Left):

Mr Alan Wall, Principal Officer of the Teacher Education Section, Department of Education and Science making a presentation to Denis O'Boyle, on his recent retirement, in recognition of his ten years service to teachers as Director of Mayo Education Centre.

Mr Wall paid tribute to Denis, at a special presentation ceremony, for his dedication, professionalism, vision and leadership qualities as Director of Mayo Education Centre.

## Scholarship Trust Announces Increase

One of Ireland's largest scholarship trusts for third level education has announced it will be awarding additional scholarships this year. The Bank of Ireland Millennium Scholars Trust will, in 2008, increase the number of students it supports for third level study, offering a lifeline to more students than ever before.

Reacting to the announcement, Assistant Principal Dorothy Lavery, said the increase was "such a welcome development". The scholarship, she added, was often "simply the difference between going and not going to college."

Linked to the Loreto College in Crumlin, Dublin, Ms Lavery has seen no less than five of her students progress to third level study with Bank of Ireland Millennium Scholars Trust backing. "It's a wonderful thing," she said of the scholarship's operation, "it changes lives."

Originally launched to mark the Millennium year, the Trust was allocated €12.5 million to make possible some 60 scholarships annually for second and third level students, mature candidates and other progression route candidates who, due to economic, social and other barriers, might not otherwise get the opportunity to bring their talents and skills on to third level.

Scholarship awards from €3,200 to €6,300 per annum are available, depending on the individual's circumstances. Awards of varying amounts are also made to students studying in the creative and performing arts. The scheme also provides for a range of supports as the student makes his or her transition to college life.

Administered by the National College of Ireland (NCI) from its base in Dublin's docklands, the Trust receives nominations from some 900 bodies representing

educational, cultural and voluntary organisations and groups working with people who are socially disadvantaged or those with disabilities.

Further details and application forms can be gained from the Trust Office at National College of Ireland (01 449 8500) or can be downloaded from the Bank of Ireland and National College of Ireland websites:

[www.bankofireland.com](http://www.bankofireland.com)

- see In the Community and

[www.ncirl.ie](http://www.ncirl.ie)

- see About NCI.



BOI MILLENNIUM SCHOLARS DAVID FARRELL AND IVARS BURNIEKS

# Annual Congress, Wexford, 25th-27th March 2008

## Congress Crèche

A crèche under professional supervision will be provided in Whites of Wexford Hotel.

Application forms for the Crèche are available from: **Trish O'Callaghan** Silverspring, Ballycogley, Co. Wexford

Mobile: 086-8263521

Email: [trishahurley@eircom.net](mailto:trishahurley@eircom.net) \*\*

\*\* Please insert "Congress 2008 Crèche" on email header

They are also available on the TUI Website – [www.tui.ie](http://www.tui.ie)

Completed forms should be returned to Trish before **22nd February 2008**.

Please note that there is a late booking fee of €60 per child for children booked into the Crèche after the deadline of **22nd February 2008**.

## Annual Elections - Home Addresses

Ballot papers for the Annual Elections will be issued on 24th January 2008.

Please ensure that we have your **correct home address** for receipt of your ballot paper.

Last date for receipt of nominations for Annual Elections is 5.00 p.m. on **Tuesday, 8th January 2008**.

## Congress Motions

The last date for receipt of motions for Annual Congress is 5.00 p.m. on **Tuesday, 18th December 2007**.

The Preliminary Agenda will be issued to Branches on Tuesday, 22nd January 2008.

## AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival 2008

### Learning Matters

Learning matters to individuals, communities and the economy. Learning builds confidence, raises voices, raises awareness, creates employment, opens minds, gives new skills, creates friendships.

### Making Learning Matter

AONTAS estimates that each year over 300,000 adults take part in adult and community education initiatives around the country. The Adult Learners' Festival from the 4th February to the 8th February is an opportunity to celebrate learning and discover why learning matters.

In the lead up to, and during the festival, AONTAS is calling on the government to **show that learning matters** by ensuring that the adult education sector receives a cumulative investment of 1% per annum, increasing to 10% of the overall education budget by the year 2013. Going by current figures this would amount to an increase of €169 million to €790 million.

## First Conference on School Attendance and Participation

### Register your Interest on [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie)

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) will host Ireland's first conference on **School Attendance and Participation – What Works and Why?** on Tuesday, 26th February 2008 at The Law Society, Blackhall Place.

Many of the world's leading experts on school attendance, participation and engagement have already confirmed as key-note speakers. There will also be valuable and practical input from Irish researchers and educators.

The primary objective of this first conference will be to explore what schools can do practically and what support they need to develop workable attendance and participation policies and strategies based on international and Irish best practice and solutions. It is planned that subsequent conferences will look in depth at other influences on school attendance such as family, community and socio-economic environment.

The conference will be of particular interest to educators, researchers and policy makers.

Places will be limited. To register your interest now, log onto [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie)

The NEWB is the statutory organization with responsibility for encouraging children and young people to attend school and to receive an education or training.

### National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)

An Bord Náisiúnta Leasa Oideachais, 16-22 Green Street, Dublin 7

T: 01-8738718 E: [info@newb.ie](mailto:info@newb.ie) Education Helpline Lo-call | 890 36 36 66

# TUI Credit Union News



The AGM of the TUI Credit Union takes place on Friday 14th December at 8pm. The venue is the Clarion Hotel, Liffey Valley Centre, Co Dublin.

The draw for the ten 40th Anniversary Bursaries will be held at the end of November and the winners announced at the AGM.

Congratulations to Mary Friel, Dublin on winning the 40th anniversary car – a Ford Focus. Congratulations also to the winners of the October monthly draw. They are:  
**A. Carolan**, Louth, (€1,500),  
**J. Bartlett**, Sligo (€1,000),  
**V. O'Connell**, Cork (€500).

To join the monthly draw please contact the Credit Union office for an application form. €5 will be deducted monthly from



your Credit Union account.

See our website ([www.tuicu.ie](http://www.tuicu.ie)) for the names of the monthly winners.

The Credit Union through its promotion sub-committee will give some financial support to members who may be

organising sporting/cultural/educational events/outings for their students.

Please write or e-mail the Promotions Sub Committee, TUI Credit Union, 73 Orwell Rd, Rathgar, Dublin 6  
 E: [tuicreditunion@eircom.net](mailto:tuicreditunion@eircom.net)  
 Beannachtaí na Nollag.

## Funding available for new ideas!



Looking for new ideas for school projects or professional development opportunities?

Need information on Europe for your students? Want to organise a school exchange?

Léargas manages a wide range of national, European and international cooperation programmes in education and is the Irish agent for the Europa Diaries, a free resource for Transition Year students.

EU-funded programmes include Comenius School Partnerships, Multilateral Projects, In-Service Training, Assistants and Networks, as well as eTwinning which promotes school partnerships using ICT.

Bilateral programmes include the East - West Schools Exchange Programme and the Irish Aid Schools Linking and Immersion Scheme.



For information on these and other Léargas activities,

please go to: [www.leargas.ie](http://www.leargas.ie) or contact us at:

Léargas, 189 Parnell Street, Dublin 1 - (01) 873 1411



# Léargas Lifelong Learning Programmes



For about 18 years, Léargas has been managing exchange and cooperation programmes in Ireland in both the formal and non-formal education sectors.

Throughout that period, students, trainees, young people, youth workers, trainers and educators have benefited from exchanging ideas, practice and different views on the world with their peers right across Europe.

The majority of the programmes have been funded by the European Commission and the Department of Education and Science and Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment.

This year the European Commission announced a new round of programmes for learners and educators across Europe: the Lifelong Learning Programme and the Youth in Action Programme.

The Lifelong Learning Programme is divided into four sectoral programmes, of which the following three are managed by Léargas:

- **Comenius** (for schools and colleges)
- **Grundtvig** (for adult and further education organisations)
- **Leonardo da Vinci** (for vocational education and training organisations).

Also under the Lifelong Learning Programme, Léargas manages Study Visits for both educational and vocational training professionals.

The Youth in Action programme provides funding for young people and youth workers in a variety of actions:

- **Action 1 - Youth for Europe:** supporting exchanges and youth initiatives and encouraging young people's participation in democratic life
- **Action 2 - European Voluntary Service:** encouraging young people to take part in a voluntary activity abroad that benefits the general public
- **Action 3 - Youth in the World:** encouraging cooperation with Partner Countries by building networks, promoting the exchange of information and assisting with cross-border activities
- **Action 4 - Youth Support Systems:** promoting the development of exchange, training and information schemes
- **Action 5 - European Cooperation:** contributing to the development of policy cooperation in the youth field.

Léargas also manages some smaller bilateral programmes on the islands of Ireland and Britain (East West Schools, NcompasS, Causeway) and an international programme for technical students, IAESTE.

This year, Léargas broadened its work—and the range of funding it offers to schools and colleges—by taking on the management of a schools linking and immersion programme on behalf of Irish Aid. On 12 December, Minister Micheál Kitt will officially launch the linking programme as WorldWise.

WorldWise aims to promote development education and raise awareness of development issues in a school partnership context. Irish schools that are interested in learning about global issues by establishing an educational link with a partner school in a developing country may apply for funding.

Grants will enable those schools to examine development education topics in greater detail, and to enable mutual learning to take place between students from both schools.

Schools may apply for multi-annual funding to support their linking or immersion projects, as well as funding for reciprocal teacher visits.

The purpose of these visits is to provide teachers in the early stages of setting up their partnership with the opportunity to visit each other. This will enable them to agree on joint aims and objectives for their project and to gain a greater understanding of their partner school.

The programme will help Irish schools to avail of development education resources and expertise in Ireland, which can then be shared with their partner school. It is hoped that the resulting awareness of global issues will provide students and teachers with a broad context in which the partnership can develop.

The next deadline for funding is **28th March 2008**.

Further details on WorldWise, as well as application forms and criteria, can be found on our website

[www.irishaid.gov.ie/schools](http://www.irishaid.gov.ie/schools) or contact the WorldWise team in Léargas at (01) 873 1411 or by email at [worldwise@leargas.ie](mailto:worldwise@leargas.ie)

For information on other Léargas programmes, check our website [www.leargas.ie](http://www.leargas.ie) call **(01) 873 1411** or email [info@leargas.ie](mailto:info@leargas.ie)



# RMA Kilkenny Trip

I promised you a report and photos of our trip to Kilkenny well 'here goes' and I hope you like the photos. The weather as usual with Dora's plans was magnificent, and Kilkenny city and countryside in autumn looked splendid. Having toured the City shops and castle we made our way to Castlecomer where they have built an interpretive centre to record the work and life of the miners and their families in the old coal mines.

The centre is quite impressive with a large open area for reception and restaurant, designed like a barn with large French oak beams, a must do for anyone visiting the area. Later that evening we had a lovely dinner in the Newpark Hotel where we were staying. Next day our first stop was Mosse's pottery in Bennettsbridge followed by a visit to a candle making factory where many purchases were made, then on to lunch in Inistioge at a café called after Maeve Binchy's book Circle of Friends, dining outdoors in the sunshine.

After lunch we made our way to Mountjuliet golf club and then on to Jerpoint Abbey where we were given a very interesting and informative guided tour. The break was enjoyed by over thirty members. Our next break will be to Sligo for our AGM and Conference in May. This trip will include a cruise on Lough Gill more information later.

Unfortunately I am still receiving complaints from members who have not yet received their pension increase due since June. This increase is due to be paid when the Department issue the enabling letter, however as reported before it seems that pensioners' needs are not a priority. Yesterday I received a letter from a member in Cavan who had not yet received the increase, despite it being six months since it was due. From the next increase we will publish the date of issue of the enabling letter and with this information you will be in a better position to approach your VEC



STUDENTS AND TEACHERS REUNITED

for prompt action. We have to continue to highlight this issue to get action.

I am sure you are amused if not a little worried reading all the attacks on the public service pension, daily articles and sometimes several articles are published criticising our pension. Our pension is a deferred payment, we have paid for it and we must stay vigilant to maintain its value however the real fight remains with those who are still teaching.

An interesting photo of four retired members tells a special story, two of them were students of the other. This photo was taken in Westport during our autumn break last year it features Paddy Byrne on the left and Sean McGauran on the right both students of Christy McCarthy and Terry Layton who taught them on the Teacher Training course in Cork in the 1950s. If any member has photos of similar historic interest we would be delighted to publish them.

**Christy Conville**  
RMA Secretary



## Seán J. Coughlan



SEÁN J. COUGHLAN, RIP

**A teacher with few equals and widely respected for his professional approach by both staff and students alike.**

The death of Seán J. Coughlan, Glasheen Road, Cork, during the summer recess was received with great sadness by his many friends and colleagues who had been privileged to have known and worked with him over a period that stretched from September 1958 to his retirement from St. Brogan's College, Bandon and Cork County VEC in August 1988.

Born in January 1923, Seán Coughlan worked in the construction industry from 1946 to 1956 and served with the County Cork VEC as a Clerk of Works during the construction of Mannix College, Rathluirc, Co. Cork from March 1956 until August 1957.

Seán Coughlan was one of many practical teachers who were head-hunted for the VEC system in the late 1950's and whose contribution to vocational education in later decades was immense and largely unsung in the annals of Irish secondary education. On receiving his teaching qualification (Gorey, 1958), Seán Coughlan received his first teaching appointment from Longford VEC and spent six happy years in the county.

He returned to his beloved Cork in September 1964 and spent the next two

years in Kiskeam Vocational School. From there he went to Dunmanway Vocational School and Bantry before being posted fulltime to Bandon Vocational School in 1972. Here he served in the most dedicated and dutiful manner until his retirement in 1988.

As a teacher he had few equals and was widely respected for his professional approach by both staff and students alike. He had a great love for his subject, Building Construction, and this love he imparted to the many students who had the good fortune to cross his path at St. Brogan's College. Seán Coughlan liked young people and, truth to tell, he was always young at heart himself.

Thanks to Seán's guiding influence and his demanding the highest standards of workmanship and endeavour from his young charges many of them continue reap a very rich harvest during these Celtic Tiger years in Ireland.

As a colleague in the staffroom, there were few to equal Seán Coughlan. He was a man of great sensitivity and sincerity and his quiet support of colleagues during tough, stressful situations and public support, if

needs be, were very much appreciated. You were never left to suffer and struggle alone. He was truly the father figure in the staffroom. As an old friend and colleague mused recently, 'he understood our moods and never failed us.'

Seán Coughlan was noted for his humour, good nature, grace and charm –the women loved him! – and, on social occasions, was the life and soul of the party. No mean singer, he was a member of a Cork choir, and entertainer, he always performed his party piece and our favourite, known to us as 'The Spanish Onion', with consummate ease and much to our delight.

Sean Coughlan was a very active supporter of the County Cork branch TUI and a regular attender and speaker at branch meetings. He was a strong advocate of workers' rights. He held strong nationalist views; he was green to his core, a thirty-two county Ireland his cherished dream. His son Charlie, to whom sincere sympathy is extended, followed 'the da' into teaching (Mayfield Community School, Cork). Seán Coughlan was predeceased by his wife, Celia, and is also survived by the loves of his life, his daughters Catherine and Sandra. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dilís.

# Michael Boran

## Member Appreciation

**They respected him, they loved him and they miss him.  
For them indeed, the loss was very great.**

It was with great sadness that we learned of the sudden death of our much loved colleague and friend Michael Boran.

Mick died suddenly while watching his U.16 Gaelic Football Team Play. Ironically his two sons were playing at the time of his tragic death.

He taught Science and Maths in Lucan as a newly qualified teacher in the early 1970s until his untimely death. Many students talk fondly of his unique style, his great wit and humanity which he brought to the classroom.

At the time of his death he was Year Head to the then Transition Years. They respected him, they loved him and they miss him. For them indeed the loss was very great.

When news filtered through to them on that too awful morning they built what can only be described as a shrine to him outside his classroom. Flowers,

photographs, poems, drawings, pictures, candles and even uniform pockets appeared everywhere.

We will never forget the bravery and courage of Mick's family when they visited the school before the funeral to talk to the heartbroken staff and students and to see for themselves the wonderful tribute which the students had created.

As often happens in tragic times people take to reminiscing. It was heart-warming to hear the students' stories, the most popular one being that when they were sent to him over some disciplinary matter, that they ended up talking about how their hurling or football skills were coming along, how well Lucan Sarsfields were doing, what was Dublin's chances next Sunday and of course how his beloved Kilkenny was doing.

Recently we had the official opening and blessing of the Memorial Fountain which we built in Mick's memory.



In the presence of staff, students, ex-students, clergy and the entire Boran family, his wife Helene performed the unveiling Ceremony.

As the Deputy Principal said at the funeral, a void has been left in Lucan Community College – a void that will be difficult to fill.

Helene, Sinéad, Caitríona, Michael, Sheena, Iain and his extended family, you are ever in our thoughts. To Michael Boran – Sleep the sleep of the brave Mick.

Ní bheidh a leithéid arís ann.

DGN